

BARNSTAPLE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH,

FOR THE YEAR 1895.

Barnstaple :

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THE HEALTH OF THE BARNSTAPLE RURAL DISTRICT.

THE MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT.

Population of the district in 1881, 18,436.

Population of the district in 1891, 19,037.

Area in statute acres, 132,598.

Total births registered in 1895, 487.

Total deaths registered in 1895, 306.

Total increase, 181.

Birth rate per 1,000 of population, 25.55.

Death rate per 1,000 of population, 16.07, or adding differences occurring in deaths outside the district among persons belonging thereto, and deaths occurring within the district among persons not belonging thereto, viz., making a death rate per 1,000 of 16.44.

Total deaths from zymotic diseases, 22.

Rate per 1,000 of population, 1.12.

Birth rate of England and Wales per 1,000 of population, 30.3.

Death rate of England and Wales per 1,000 of population, 18.7.

Death rate from principal zymotic diseases for England and Wales per 1,000 of population, 2.14.

Bear-street, Barnstaple, February 14th, 1896.

To the Chairman and members of the Rural District Council, Barnstaple Union,—Gentlemen,—I have the honour to forward you my Annual Report for the year 1895.

POPULATION.—The population, according to the Census of 1891, shows a slight increase to that of 1881, the population of 1881 being 18,436 and that of 1891, being 19,037, increase 601.

ACREAGE.—The whole district contains 132,598 acres, and is divided into three districts superintended by your three Sanitary Inspectors, viz:—

DISTRICTS:—

District.	Sanitary Officer.	Acreage.	Population.
No. 1.	John Clement	36,402	6,849
No. 2.	Richard Vicary	40,103	6,755
No. 3.	Samuel Robins	56,093	5,433
Total.....		132,598	19,037.

MR. JOHN CLEMENT has resigned his appointment and MR. EDGER has been selected to fill his place.

VITAL STATISTICS.—The vital statistics will be found in the corresponding tables and are estimated on the Census of 1891.

BIRTH RATE.—The total number of births registered in the 1895 was 487, as against 485 in 1894 and as against 538 for 1893. Of these 277 were males and 210 females, giving a birth-rate of 25.55 per 1,000 of population, as against 25.47 for 1894.

DEATH RATE.—The total number of deaths registered in the year 1895 was 306, as against 312 in 1894 and 256 for 1893. Of the deaths 155 were males and 151 females, being an average death rate of 16.07 per 1,000 of population as against 16.38 for 1894 and 13.44 for 1893.

The following table will show the deaths at different ages.

Districts.			
No. 1	No. 2	No. 3	Total.
46	50	45	141
24	20	25	69
5	3	2	10
2	11	4	17
5	5	6	16
17	21	15	53
99	110	97	306

Of the 141 deaths at 65 and upwards,

50 were 80 years and upwards.

6 were 80 years, 7 were 81 years

5 " 82 " 5 " 83 "

3 " 84 " 5 " 86 "

4 " 87 " 3 " 88 "

3 " 89 " 2 " 90 "

1 was 92 " 1 was 94 "

and 1 was 95 "

The deaths in 1895 were attributed to the following diseases:—

DISEASES.	DISTRICTS.			
	No. 1	2	3	Tl.
Diphtheria	0	6	1	7
Membranous Croup	0	2	0	2
Diarrhoea	1	5	2	8
Puerperal Fever	1	0	0	1
Phthisis	8	5	1	14
Bronchitis, Pneumonia and Pleurisy	14	14	14	42
Heart Disease	10	4	14	28
Injuries	2	4	2	8
Other diseases including 13 from Influenza and 18 from Apoplexy	61	70	58	189
Scarlet Fever	1	0	2	3
Enteric or Typhoid Fever.....	0	0	1	1
Measles	0	0	2	2
Whooping Cough	1	0	0	1
Total	99	110	97	306

The deaths from Phthisis are 12 as against 15 for 1894.

The deaths from Zymotic diseases are 22 as against 21 for 1894.

DISEASES.	DISTRICTS			
	No. 1	2	3	Tl.
Diphtheria	0	6	1	7
Diarrhoea	1	5	2	8
Puerperal Fever	1	0	0	1
Scarlet Fever	1	0	2	3
Enteric or Typhoid Fever	0	0	1	1
Measles	0	0	2	2
Total	3	11	8	22

Equal to a death rate of 1.15 per 1,000 as against 1.10 for 1894.

CANCER.—The registered deaths from Cancer are 16—6 males and 10 females—as against 13; 2 males and 11 females, for 1894, giving a death rate of 0.84 per 1,000 as against 0.68 for 1894, or 5.22 per cent. of total deaths, as against 4.16 per cent. for 1894. 5 occurred in the No. 1 District, 7 in the No. 2 District, and 4 in the No. 3 District.

INFANT MORTALITY.—Deaths under one year. Immaturity at birth, 1; debility from birth, 5; premature birth, 4; whooping cough, 1; convulsions, 7; bronchitis and pneumonia, 8; diarrhoea, 6; asthma, 4; asphyxia neonatorum, 2; icterus neonatorum, 2; marasmus, 4; congenital stenosis of oesophagus, 1; tabes mesenterica, 1; natural causes inquest, 1; gastro enteritis, 3; croup, 1; nephritis, 1; congenital valvular incompetency of heart, 1.—Total, 53. Giving a death rate of 108.88 per 1,000 of registered births, as against 121.6 for 1894; 102.23 for 1893; 96.77 for 1892; 107.52 for 1891; 151.52 for 1890.

DIPHTHERIA.—During the year 42 cases have been notified to me, of these 7 proved fatal, 6 in the No. 2 district, and 1 in the No. 3 district, as against 40 notifications and ten deaths in 1894. The first death occurred in the house of the Schoolmaster at Morthoe, which is under the same roof as the school buildings, and to the school must be attributed the spread of the disease. At this time the school and school house were inspected and the school ordered to be cleaned and fumigated. The urinal was ordered to be repaired, and the drain at the east corner, which was broken and open was ordered to be repaired and properly covered in. The house was thoroughly fumigated. The school was closed from January 31 to March 3rd, on March 25th four scholars were taken ill and the school again closed until the 25th April. A careful inspection was again made and the drainage found to be very defective. The school was again closed from April 24th to May 5th during drainage operations. The next fatal case at Morthoe was a little girl, who died on February 15th at the Viearage, several defects were found in the premises which were remedied, this child was at the school for twenty minutes on January 20th. The next three fatal cases occurred in the parish of Georgelam, and were two sisters named Emmeline and Rose Gammon, aged respectively twelve and seven years, who died in the month of March; the other, Ada Nightingale, who died in June. In these cases the houses were much overcrowded, and the bedroom accommodation very defective.

In the case of the Gammon's the house consisted of one living and two bedrooms, was damp and ill-ventilated, and several feet below the level of the road, which ran in front of it. The family consisted of two adults and six children. The mother was taken ill after nursing Emmeline, who died on March 17th.

The other children were removed to an empty cottage, when the daughter Rose showed signs of the disease, was removed to their own cottage, and died on March 22nd. In the case of Nightingale the house had only one living and one sleeping room to accommodate two adults and six children. The sixth case occurred in the parish of Goodleigh, in the month of June; this was an isolated case. There were some cases of diphtheria at Osaborough cottages, and one of the children died before the doctor saw it, and the death was registered as convulsions, but from enquiries made and from the opinion of the doctor who attended the children, I have no doubt it was a case of diphtheria, as three days after two children in the same cottage developed the disease. It was suggested to the parents the desirability of removing the children to the hospital ship, but they most positively refused to allow the children to be removed, but they consented to the other children being removed to a cottage occupied by a man and his wife, without children, friends of theirs; they and their clothes were thoroughly disinfected and they were removed, and escaped the disease.

SCARLET FEVER.—Eighty-four cases, of a mild type, have been notified to me, as against 183 for the year 1894. Of these three proved fatal, one in the No. 1 district and two in the No. 3 district. Considerable more care has been exercised in the management and control of the cases.

ENTERIC FEVER.—Four cases have been notified, one in the No. 1 district, two in the No. 2 district, and one in the No. 3 district, and only one proved fatal, the case in the No. 3 district, which was that of a boy living at the village of Eastdown. Nothing could be found to account for this outbreak. The first case in the No. 2 district was that of a girl removed from the Borough of Barnstaple to her home in the rural parish of Pilton, and special reference was made to this case in my note to the Authority of February 8th. The second case, in the No. 2 district, was a sporadic case, and occurred at Branton, and was considered to be due to the water obtained from a well on the premises. This well has been cleaned out and the walls washed with lime water. The case in the No. 1 district was, I have no doubt, due to drinking water from an impure well. The cottage was also quite unfit for the occupation of the man and his family, and was one of the cases commonly met with, viz., that of a labourer getting married and occupying a small house, which, as his family increases, becomes quite unfit for their occupation, although it was sufficient for him and his wife at the time of their marriage. The bedroom accommodation was quite unfit for such a large family. They have had notice to leave the house. I have examined the water from both wells and find it unfit for domestic purposes, unless boiled before using. The walls have been cleaned out and put in order. The water has again been examined and found good.

DIARRHOEA.—Eight deaths were registered, one was a man aged 45 years, another that of a female 88 years of age, the rest were children under one year.

INFLUENZA is returned as causing 13 deaths during the year.

NOTIFICATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES.—During the year the following diseases have been notified to me:—

Diseases	DISTRICTS.			
	No. 1	No. 2	No. 3	Tl.
Diphtheria	0	33	9	42
Scarlet Fever	36	21	27	84
Enteric Fever	1	2	1	4
Erysipelas	4	1	8	13
Puerperal Fever	2	0	0	2
Total	43	57	45	145

as against 258 for 1894; 159 for 1893; 165 for 1892.

The great falling-off this year as compared with 1894, is in the number of cases of scarlet fever. Dual notification is still a failure. Out of the 145 cases notified only two parents or householders, one in the No. 1 district and 1 in the No. 2 district have sent me the proper notice. It is in this way that where mild cases exist (and no doctor is called in), that the disease is spread by the parents or guardians failing to exercise proper care and control over the cases. I have again to thank several of the medical gentlemen who furnish me with their certificates of notification, for very valuable assistance in carrying out the necessary means for the prevention and spread of disease.

The following table gives a list of the notifications in the various months :—

Year 1895.	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Enteric or Typhoid Fever.	Diarrhoea and Dysentery.	Erysipelas.	Puerperal Fever.	Tl.	Tl.
January under 5 .. 3							3	16
5 and upwards .. 9			1	3			13	
February under 5 .. 2	2						4	13
5 and upwards .. 4	5						9	
March under 5 2	1						3	24
5 and upwards .. 12	7			1	1		21	
April under 5				1			1	5
5 and upwards ..	4						4	
May under 5	2						2	10
5 and upwards .. 1	4			2	1		8	
June under 5	2						2	10
5 and upwards .. 2	4	1		1			8	
July under 5								2
5 and upwards ..	2							
August under 5								9
5 and upwards .. 6		1		2			9	
September under 5 .. 3							3	13
5 and upwards .. 8				2			10	
October under 5 .. 4	2						6	23
5 and upwards .. 10	5		1	1			17	
November under 5 ..								10
5 and upwards .. 8	2						10	
December under 5 .. 3							3	10
5 and upwards .. 7							7	
	17	9		1			27	
Total ..	67	33	3	1	12	2	118	145

RAINFALL IN 1895.

The rainfall in 1895 registered at the North Devon Athenæum, Barnstaple, by Mr. T. Wainwright, was as follows :—

Diameter of funnel 8 inches. Height of the top above ground. 6 feet, and above sea level 15 feet.

Month	Total depth. Inches.	Greatest fall in 24 hours. Depth.	Date.	No. of days on which 0.1 or more fell.
January	3.72	0.70	20	21
February	0.14	0.11	25	2
March	3.34	0.61	20	18
April	1.72	0.35	18	11
May	0.79	0.25	1	6
June	1.58	0.67	30	4
July	3.56	0.64	20	13
August	3.57	0.67	3	18
September	0.67	0.33	6	6
October	5.75	0.59	1	20
November	4.72	0.73	7	22
December	4.22	0.66	15	25
Total	33.78			166

It has been rather a cold and wet year, the longest consecutive dry period was 23 days from February 1st to the 23rd, the next longest from September 12th to the 24th. February, May and September were very dry, January, February (especially) and October were very cold, July and August rather cold, May, September and November were warm.

Mr. Wainwright says the only years since 1864 when the maximum temperature in September has been higher than the above, 81.5 in the shade on the 27th and 28th were in 1865, 83 degrees; 1868, 87 degrees, 1880, 82.5 degrees, but in all these cases the maximum was reached in the first half of the month, and was attained for one day only. The single smaller September rainfall was in 1858, when 0.31 in. was registered. Evergreens and shrubs were much browned; and some killed, where exposed to the cold and dry easterly gale which blew in February. The great frost which commenced on January 26th, lasted the whole of February.

DISINFECTION.—I am pleased to state there is every probability of a proper apparatus for the purpose of disinfecting clothing, bedding, &c., being provided within a short period by an arrangement with the Urban Sanitary Authority, and a proper cart for conveying the infected goods to the disinfecting chamber. As I have before stated, the hanging up of clothes, bedding, &c., in a chamber with the fumes of burning sulphur, is not at all sufficient to destroy the germs of infectious diseases. An arrangement has also been entered into with the Port Sanitary Authority, for the use of the Hospital Ship "Nymphen."

WATER SUPPLY.—Parish meetings have been held at Braunton and Landkey to take into consideration the Water supply. In both cases it has been deferred. The water supply at Guineaford, Marwood; Tallyn's, Tawstock; Yelland, Fremington, have also been attended to. During the year one analysis of water has been made by Dr. Wynter Blyth, and he reported it as suitable for drinking and domestic purposes. Five certificates have been granted in respect to seven new houses and nine notices have been served on owners to provide a proper supply of water for occupied houses.

DAIRIES AND COWSHED ACT.—No fresh dairies have been registered.

SLAUGHTER HOUSES have been visited and inspected and no complaints received.

OVERCROWDING.—Two cases were brought before the Magistrates on November 20th, both in the village of Georgeham. Both parties were convicted and fined. One case of overcrowding also at Swymbridge. Notice has been served on the occupier to give up possession of the house.

NEW HOUSES.—The plans of one house have been rejected by the Authority on account of want of air space at the back.

ANTHRAX.—On March 13th I received notice from the Superintendent, Devon County Police, of an outbreak of Anthrax at Borough, Morthoe. The cause of the outbreak is difficult to trace as there was no direct communication with this farm and Shelfin, where the serious outbreak had recently occurred, but it was thought possible it may have been conveyed by a dog.

DRAINAGE, SEWERAGE, &C.

The houses at Branton are being connected with the main drains. Considerable complaints have reached me as to the nuisance arising from the man-holes. A flushing apparatus has been fixed. At Combmartin also the flushing apparatus works well. Some slight drainage works have been carried out at Fremington and West Down. Considerable drainage works have been carried out at Instow, the rural part of Pilton and at Sticklepath, Tawstock. Local Government Board enquiries were held at the Instow, and also at the Guildhall, Barnstaple, with regard to the question of the Instow and Sticklepath drainage schemes.

MORTHOE CHURCHYARD.—Dr. Hoffman visited, and held an enquiry at Morthoe, as to the closing of the Churchyard, which has been ordered to take effect in June, 1896. He also visited two sites with some members of the Parish Council and the Medical Officer of Health, for a new burying ground.

Special Inspection and reports have been made as to the schools of Morthoe and Georgeham and as to the Sanitary condition of a Farm at Arlington Beccott, and the piggeries at Ashford, &c. The following schools have been closed during the year :—

MORTHOE from January 31st to March 3rd, on account of Diphtheria at the school house, and from March 25th to April 15th, on account of Diphtheria, and from April 29th to May 5th, on account of drainage operations being carried out by the managers.

LANDKEY.—The school at Landkey was closed on account of Scarlet Fever in August.

BRENDON.—This school was closed on account of measles at the Master's house in October.

NUISANCES have been complained of at Harracott, Fremington, Fremington Station, Branton, Morthoe, Brendon, West Down, Pilton West, Goodleigh, Combmartin, Georgeham, Landkey and Ashford. Inspections have been made and the nuisances abated.

A considerable amount of work has been done which does not come to the notice of the Council. A large number of visits paid and letters written.

I have to thank the Inspectors for the very valuable and ready help afforded me at all times.—I am, gentlemen, your obedient servant,

JOSEPH HARPER,
Medical Officer of Health.



ording to DISEASES, AGES, and LOCALITIES.

ING DEATHS OF CHILDREN UNDER FIVE YEARS OF AGE.											
11	12	13	14	15	17	18	19	*	20	21	22
Erysipelas.	Measles.	Whooping Cough.	Diarrhoea and Dysentery	Rheumatic Fever.	Phthisis.	Bronchitis, Pneumonia and Pleurisy.	Heart Disease.		Injuries.	All Other Diseases.	TOTAL
					1		2			1	10
					2	2	1		1	5	15
						1	1			3	8
										5	2
										2	10
					3	1	1			1	9
			1		1		1			4	9
										3	19
						2				5	20
					1	4			1	6	3
						4	4			4	
										8	
										3	
					8	3	10		2	17	99
						11				44	

on (1891), 6,849.

ing to DISEASES, AGES, and LOCALITIES.

							1			1	2
										1	1
			1			1				1	86
			1		1	3	1		1	7	15
					1		2			18	5
					1	1				0	6
					1	1				2	7
										4	13
					1	1				2	10
			1			2		1		6	7
			1					2		1	8
			1			1				4	
										2	
										2	
										5	
			4			6				14	110
			1			8	4		4	56	

ion (1891), 6,755.

